

KOUAM Claude Biography

Born on 31 March 1976, Claude Kouam is a Cameroonian boxing coach, professional martial arts manager and the founder and CEO of the *Mboa Sport Association*, a leading martial arts organisation founded in 2020.

Originally from the West Region of Cameroon, he grew up in the "*Suburban Manguier*" district of Yaounde, where boxing was already a popular pastime in the 1980s. During his childhood, he often accompanied his older brothers and uncles to watch them train with makeshift punching bags filled with sand or cement. The influence of renowned Olympic bronze medallist Martin NDONGO-EBANGA, who lived in his neighbourhood, further fuelled his passion for boxing and his dream of becoming a champion.

Boxing career

In 1988, KOUAM Claude moved to Bafoussam in the West Region of Cameroon to continue his education. It was there that he joined the Gendarmerie Gymnasium and began formal boxing training at the age of twelve. Three years later, in 1991, at the age of fifteen, he took part in his first amateur fight and won, marking the beginning of his national boxing career. In 1995, he reached the semi-finals of the Cameroonian national championship, where he was beaten by ATANGANA MBOA Ernest.

In 2005, Claude moved to Dubai to explore new opportunities while continuing to pursue his dream of becoming a champion. After years of training without competing, he achieved a major milestone by winning the Emirates Championship that same year, defeating Mogamed Sulemanov. Following this victory, he decided to put his boxing career on hold to concentrate on a full-time role with one of Dubai's largest security agencies. Despite stepping away from competition, he remained committed to training and maintaining his passion for the sport.

Coaching career

In 2007, after observing KOUAM conducting some training sessions, his Ghanaian friend ALADJI encouraged him to pursue a career in coaching. His friend, who already had an established client base in Dubai, invited him to join the profession. He accepted the opportunity and began his journey as a boxing trainer, quickly developing a deep passion for the field.

His dedication soon led to a professional role as a boxing coach at Contender MMA Gym in Dubai, an initiative founded by British fighter Tam Khan. Contender was the first gym in the Middle East to offer mixed martial arts training. Over the years, KOUAM honed his coaching skills by working at several prominent gyms in Dubai, including Glory MMA and HM Fitness. Eventually, he decided to go into business for himself, taking on his own clients and managing his own schedule.

In 2012, KOUAM returned to Cameroon and was disheartened to find that the boxing scene had made little progress. Determined to make a difference, he set up his first boxing club in Bafoussam, the town where his journey began, to provide opportunities for the youth in his community. In 2013, he organised his first boxing event at the Party's House Hall in Bafoussam, attracting an audience of over 1,500 fans. Encouraged by the success, he organised more shows in Yaounde and Douala. However, due to various administrative and organisational challenges, he was eventually forced to close the *Mboa Sport Association*.

In 2020, KOUAM took steps to expand his boxing club initiative by launching the *Mboa Sport Association* in his hometown of Yaounde, in the Central Region of Cameroon. This new venture aimed to identify and develop young talent in a wider range of disciplines, expanding beyond boxing to include mixed martial arts, sambo and kickboxing. The initiative sought to create more opportunities for athletes both nationally and internationally. To further strengthen the project, he secured partnerships that facilitated its expansion beyond Cameroon to Dubai and England.

The *Mboa Sport Association* operates as a multi-disciplinary martial arts club with affiliations to prominent governing bodies in Cameroon such as FECABOXE, FECASAMBO and FECAMMADA. Internationally, it works with organisations such as Manchester Top Team in England and Peoples Fighter Gym in Dubai. Over the years, the association has been instrumental in the development of exceptional international talent, including

- **Stéphane FODJO**, WBC Middle East Champion (2022), African Champion (2019), and WBA Asian Champion (2023).
- **Jean Junior MESSI**, WBA Asian Champion (2023).
- **Maxwell DJANTOU NANA**, who has signed with the Professional Fighters League.
- **ATEBA Gautier**, the youngest African athlete to sign with the UFC.

- Emerging talents like **TAMBA Merlin** and others who continue to rise in the combat sports arena.

The *Mboa Sport Association* is dedicated not only to the development of elite athletes, but also to supporting its members in pursuing aspirations beyond the world of sport. Its mission is to create exemplary African leaders through the discipline and values instilled by sport. To achieve this, the association provides guidance, mentorship and financial support to help members achieve their personal goals, whether in academics, entrepreneurship or vocational training.

In addition, the *Mboa Sport Association* is actively working to organise a series of boxing events in Cameroon. These events aim to create more opportunities for athletes across the country, Central Africa and the wider sub-region. By implementing this strategy, the association aims to enable African athletes to earn a sustainable livelihood on the continent while building their professional records. Ultimately, this initiative will help athletes gain the necessary credentials to compete internationally and advance their careers on the global stage.